



## in focus **NEPAL FLOOD RECOVERY PROGRAM (2008 to 2012)**



Devastating Floods in 2008



Farmer monitors his early harvest rice crop in Sunsari district's Koshi flood-affected area



# REBUILDING A BRIGHTER AND SECURE FUTURE

The USAID Nepal Flood Recovery Program (NFRP) began in 2008 in response to the devastating floods that caused severe damage to infrastructure, livelihoods, and the health of more than 800,000 people in 13 Terai districts. Implemented by [Fintrac](#), the program initially focused on income generation through commercial farming and repairing or building small-scale infrastructure in flood-affected communities. The intention was to stimulate agricultural production and economic activity in the wake of the disaster.

USAID continues to partner with [Fintrac](#)

as a part of the U.S. Government's [Feed the Future initiative](#). The NFRP, now, focuses heavily on nutrition and health, recognizing the critical role nutrition plays in economic development and food security.

NFRP's objective is to improve the affordability, accessibility, and availability of nutritious food to rural households by integrating the complementary impacts of commercial agriculture, nutrition and hygiene, and productive infrastructure. Multifaceted causes of poverty, food insecurity, and malnutrition must be addressed by approaches that recognize the

relationship between income generation, food productivity, and consumption.

By focusing on agricultural assistance and community development first, the program earned the trust of smallholder farmers who saw a bridge repaired or experienced significant increases in crop productivity. Witnessing these successes, families gained confidence in NFRP's abilities and were more likely to trust the program's advice in other areas. Community buy-in and farmer trust were critical to overall program success. ....[Continued on Page 4.](#)

*Photos: Nepal Flood Recovery Program*



Sheila Lutjens, Deputy Mission Director, USAID/Nepal

The testimonials of some of the beneficiaries of USAID's Nepal Flood Recovery Program (NFRP), implemented by [Fintrac](#), certainly express the huge impact this program has had on the people of the Terai region of Nepal. The achievements of the program over the years have been laudable, starting with assisting hundreds of thousands of people severely affected by the floods in 2008 to expanding the program's horizon over the years to focus on community development, particularly in the areas of nutrition and health, and food security. As Joe Sanders, Chief of Party of NFRP, stated - "These stories, and many others, would not be possible without mutually trusting relationships." A key to many aspects of our work and lives.



# SNAPSHOT: KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

Worked with **7, 600 farmers** in commercial agriculture and helped **increase their net sales by 800 percent**

More than **4,500 home gardens** are now producing nutrient-rich fruits and vegetables for home consumption

More than **6,000 people, primarily women**, received training on health and nutrition

Generated 225,000 days of surplus on-farm employment, **and more than tripled their household incomes**, which in turn improves nutritional status and stimulates local economic growth

A **decrease in seasonal migration** and an **increase in school enrollment** in targeted communities

NFRP-supported 131 infrastructure projects directly **benefited 840,000 people** and created **165,000 person** days of employment



## Relationships Built on Trust are Key to Successful Impact

*By Joe Sanders, Chief of Party, USAID-Nepal Flood Recovery Program*

Nutrition is an important component of economic development and food security. Evidence shows that malnutrition in the first two years of life permanently reduces cognitive function and physical capacity, making individuals more vulnerable to disease. This, in turn, reduces productivity, slows economic growth, and perpetuates poverty.

Nutrition practices are often based on customs and beliefs passed down for generations, which can make them difficult to change. It is only through strong relationships built on trust and consistency that we can hope to introduce sustainable nutrition practices that will improve food security for rural smallholder farmers.

Fintrac first started working in Nepal in the aftermath of the devastating 2007 and 2008 floods. Our USAID-funded Nepal Flood Recovery Program (NFRP) helped flood-affected communities “build back better.” We focused on small-scale community

infrastructure projects such as bridges, irrigation channels, and schools, employing thousands of otherwise unemployed men and women. Through these projects, our teams got to know and understand these rural communities. As our relationship with USAID continued, NFRP began to focus more on commercial agriculture – introducing high-value crops and good agriculture practices to increase both incomes and food security, which is what the Feed the Future is all about.

I hear stories from my team everyday about the impact our work has on an individual level. Take the story of Phulmati Rana – Phulmati could barely support her family of eight with her small rice crop. Her husband had to spend half of every year working in India for extra money. Her children were undernourished, subsisting on small meals of rice. After working with NFRP’s agronomists, Phulmati learned how to plant and harvest high-value

vegetables such as cauliflower, tomato, and eggplant. Her family’s income has drastically increased, her children are healthier, and her husband now stays in Nepal to help run the family farm.

Or look at Roni Rana, a 19-year-old mother who participated in one of NFRP’s health and nutrition workshops – Roni had no idea why her infant baby was always fussy and ill, but after attending a training on infant nutrition she was able to provide adequate nutrition through breastfeeding. “My baby is four months old now,” she said. “She is growing healthy and has stopped crying as she used to.”

These stories, and many others, would not be possible without mutually trusting relationships. Earning confidence and respect can often be more valuable and more sustainable than a hundred infrastructure projects.



# TESTIMONIALS

**“I had no idea about feeding requirements for sick children. After participating in NFRP family nutrition training, I learned that children need certain nutritious foods to fight illnesses. Now my son is recovering faster and getting sick less often thanks to his healthy diet.”** Janaki Chaudhary, Nutrition trainee and home gardener, Beldadi, Jhalari – 4, Kanchanpur

**“Learning how to manage my finances was the most important thing I learned from the NFRP training. I used to spend my money without thinking about budgeting or recordkeeping, but now I record income and expenses. This is helping me spend and save my money wisely.”** Bindu Chaudhary, Commercial Farmer, Mauriphata, Krishnapur, Kanchanpur

**“I never imagined that we would be successful at growing crops in riverbeds and in earning such a big income from riverbed farming. It is a great boon for poor and landless families. Now I am able to stay home with my family; I have stopped migrating in search of employment. My economic and social statuses have greatly improved. Farmers who could not participate in NFRP’s program come to me for advice on how to grow high-value crops. I feel proud that I can teach my neighbors.”** Hari Chandra Rana, Commercial farmer, Parasan, Kanchanpur

**“My dream of becoming a commercial farmer has been realized thanks to NFRP’s help. In Pokhara, we have succeeded in moving from subsistence, staple crop farming to planting and harvesting high-value crops. This is a big shift.”** Tek Bahadur Bhandari, Chairperson, Samajji Farmer’s Group, Pokhara, Amargadhi -7, Dadeldhura

**“Healthy eating and regular physical activities makes for a healthy life, which I learned after participating in USAID-NFRP’s nutrition training. I used to sell all my vegetables at the local market, but now that I understand the importance of a balanced diet, we are eating the vegetables we now grow. My family feels that we are growing healthy.”** Sukur Raj Chaudhary, Commercial farmer, Baluwaphata, Krishnapur -9, Kanchanpur



## Productive Farm Helps Reunite Family (A Success Story)

Sushmita Chaudhary had difficulty supporting her large family on her small farm. The family was only able to produce enough food to feed them for seven months. Chaudhary was forced to sharecrop on another farm to earn enough to feed her family.

Several members of the family, including Chaudhary’s husband and brother-in-law, were forced to emigrate to India in search of low-paying jobs. In 2010, four months of work only netted them a total of \$284 (NRs. 23,000). Paired with the \$2,800 (NRs. 228,000) the family earned from agriculture, they were still more than \$1,200 (NRs. 99,000) short of earning enough to meet their basic needs.

“The income and cereal crop production from our land was inadequate to sustain our 10 family members,” Chaudhary said.

In April 2011, Chaudhary heard of USAID’s Nepal Flood Recovery Program (NFRP) through a community farmer group.

She decided to join, allocating one-third of her 0.6 hectare farm to high-value crops such as tomato and cauliflower.

She participated in the program trainings, learning good agricultural practices such as nursery management, nutrient application, trellising, crop rotation, and planting techniques. She also has access to the group’s shallow tube well, which allowed her to irrigate her crops regularly. Chaudhary received access to inputs such as seeds and fertilizers through USAID-NFRP.

In November, Chaudhary’s harvest earned gross sales of \$1,400 (NRs. 105,000). Once she paid off her production costs, she earned more than \$1,200, which is more than seven times the income she took home the previous year from rice production on the same size of land. Productivity on that plot of land had increased eleven-fold.

By continuing to employ good agricultural practices and with access to quality inputs, Chaudhary could stand to earn

nearly \$8,000 in one year from her entire 0.6 hectare plot. This kind of income growth is truly transformational for her family.

“Thanks to the training and support from the program, I have no more worry now. I am confident this will lead to a better life for my family,” she said.

With increased incomes and yields, the family is able to stay together and farm their own land. Chaudhary has convinced her husband they can earn enough at home to support their family, eliminating the need for him to travel to India in search of difficult jobs with little income potential.

“My husband has already cancelled his plan to migrate to India this season,” she said. “He is now working with me on our farm.”

With the additional income, Chaudhary and her family will purchase a motorcycle to use for transporting their produce to bigger and better-paying markets. They are also investing in their children’s education.



*Continued (page 1 - Rebuilding a Brighter and Secure Future)*

Social inclusion is another significant focus of NFRP activities. Nearly 40 percent of rural households in Nepal are women-led, meaning their participation is critical to achieving sustainable impact of any development efforts. Women and marginal groups are included in all aspects of program activity, from design to implementation. Another key aspect of NFRP's success is partnerships with local organizations and

government agencies, which serve to solidify the program's integrated approach and build local capacity, ensuring long-term relationships between local partners and program beneficiaries.

Now wrapping up its third and final phase, the extensive impact of NFRP is quite visible (see Snapshot). The NFRP staff are on the ground everyday, visiting farmers, checking in on children, and supporting community-based health centers. Communities understand the program's

commitment and, in turn, demonstrated their dedication through participation in innovative cost-sharing and co-investment programs such as NFRP's voucher initiative.

Thanks to a dedicated team, motivated beneficiaries, and committed partners, NFRP is proud to have helped nearly one million Nepalis move themselves out of poverty and into a brighter, more secure future.



## NEWS IN BRIEF - JULY 2012

**Tribhuvan International Airport Pavement & Geotechnical Analysis Results:** On July 9, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) presented the final results of pavement and geotechnical field work completed at Tribhuvan International Airport (TIA) to a packed room of disaster response stakeholders. USACE started the discussion with a background on how the project came to fruition and the initial seismic vulnerability assessments that were performed at TIA in April 2011. TIA's current airfield surface can continue to support up to 100,000+ passes if properly maintained. If maintenance is not performed on a regular basis or to international standards, then the number of passes significantly declines. The preliminary results indicate that the runway should be able to maintain a minimum of 6,000 continuous feet of surface for takeoff and landing. However, liquefaction potential is high near the Buddha Air Hangar, Nepal Army Mid-Air Base, Crash Fire Rescue Building, Nepal Oil Corporation, and the Cargo Warehouse. Slope stability is also a concern near the Cargo Warehouse. USACE will be incorporating an additional 18 boreholes provided by the Civil Aviation Authority of Nepal to increase the accuracy of the preliminary liquefaction map.

**Nepal GIS Integration:** In partnership with the Nepal National Planning Commission (NPC) and USAID, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and the Pacific Disaster Center (PDC) commenced the first phase of the Nepal Geographic

Information System (GIS) Integration Project from 1-6 July 2012 on behalf of the U.S. Pacific Command (USPACOM). The project, which is scheduled to be completed in September 2013, will assess gaps and geospatial strengths within the Government of Nepal; develop a centralized GIS and Decision Support System (DSS) to support disaster management, governance, planning, and development; and provide a pilot activity where the Government of Nepal can evaluate the integration of resulting deliverables into business processes. USACE visited 18 different ministry offices during the first six days of July, completing a majority of the Phase 1 GIS assessment surveys necessary to prepare an initial gap analysis report. The NPC will complete the remaining surveys no later than July 27 for inclusion in the draft GIS Data Gap & Strength Assessment Report.

**DGO Team Completes Three-Week Assessment:**

On July 26, the Democracy and Governance Assessment (DGA) Team conducted an out-brief of its preliminary findings on the core DG issues in Nepal. The briefing followed three weeks of interview with key Nepali political, governmental, and civil society actors, as well as international NGOs and donors. Charge d'Affaires Patricia Mahoney, Acting Mission Director Sheila Lutjens, USAID officers, and representatives from the Department of State, Justice, and Defense attended. The DGA highlighted the increase in social and political inclusion and the corresponding inability of the government

to accommodate the demands of traditionally marginalized groups. These factors, coupled with the dominance of Nepal's political actors, compose the core of the country's democracy and governance problem. USAID Washington will be briefed on the assessment on Monday. The final DGA Report is expected to be released in early Fall.

### INSIDE USAID/NEPAL High Spirit Award: Navin Hada

*"For tirelessly leading GDO to respond to hundreds of Food Security RFP Questions and resolving issues related to GON engagement during a period of limited staff."*

